Pride in Place — Bentilee & Ubberley Neighbourhood Board 6

Meeting: Pride in Place, Bentilee & Ubberley Neighbourhood Board Meeting 6
Date: 15 October 2026
Time: 4.00pm
Location: Discovery Academy — The Discovery Suite
Co-Chairs: Amy Harris & Simon French
Minute Taker: Waqas Butt

Attendees

Board

Amy Harris – Co-Chair
Cllr Sarah Jane Colclough
Cllr Lynn Watkins
Lee Jones Jr
Tracey Johnson
Steve Adams (Online)
Donna Firman
Andrew Firman
Mereoni Jegesa

Others

Nicola Brown — Communities Manager, Office of Gareth Snell MP
Cassie Weaver — Partnerships & Collaborations Lead, VAST
Waqas Butt — Pride in Place Coordinator VAST
Andy Meakin — Chief Executive, VAST
Vicki Gwynne — Local Authority Accountable Body representative (Online)

Apologies

Sha Owusu
Gareth Snell
Simon French

Summary of Decisions

D1 The policy suite was approved, subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting, with the exception of the Scheme of Delegation.

D2 The public register of interests will be published on the website (names and nature of interests only, no personal addresses), as required by MHCLG. The

Secretariat and accountable body will hold the full internal register. All other board documentation including minutes, governance documentation, events to be put onto the new Our Bentillee Our Future Website.

D3 Instruction to remove "I used to live in the area" from page 31 of the Policies document, as it is not part of the MHCLG guidance.

D4 The quarterly monitoring return due on 29 October will be signed off by the Board by email, as there is no meeting before the deadline.

D5 The small-grants documents (application form, criteria, scoring rubric and grant agreement) will be finalised after Board comments by Thursday 22 October, ready for the stakeholder launch on 3 November.

D6 The small-grants programme will run in regular funding rounds (broadly bi-monthly) rather than first come, first served. The first round will close at the end of December, with the panel meeting in January. Panel size and quorum are to be confirmed.

D7 The draft priorities (children and young people; safety and security; environment and green space; physical and mental health; with education and skills as a possible cross-cutting theme) were supported as a working basis for the 30 November submission. No vote was required. Members will feed back on the slide deck, and engagement will continue in parallel.

1. Welcome

Amy welcomed the board to the board meeting.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Meeting notes were shared prior to the meeting as will be the normal process, amendments via email response to keep with MHCLG Timeline.

3. Policies Confirmation

The revised policy suite was presented. It has been substantially reworked to reflect the Board's own governance arrangements rather than adapted from a different context. The following points were raised and agreed:

Safeguarding: Concern was raised about Board members holding a safeguarding concern out of hours or over a weekend, and the psychological impact of this. The policy will include the opening hours of the relevant services and the council's 24/7 emergency duty team. Where someone is in immediate danger, the emergency services remain the first route. Board members can also contact one another for support.

Complaints: The escalation route will be made more explicit, with complaints moving to the next stage, including the Board, where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome.

Register of interests: The accountable body confirmed that MHCLG requires a public register of interests on the website. It should show names and the nature of each interest (for example, resident, business role or political party) but not addresses. The Secretariat and accountable body will hold the internal register with full details. The wording will be updated so that the register is made available via the website.

Membership: Instruction to remove "I used to live in the area" from page 31 of the Policies document, as it is not part of the MHCLG guidance.

Transparency: MHCLG expects Board papers to be available five days before meetings, with minutes published. Now that the website is live, documents and Board notes will be published there. Members can continue to send amendments to Board notes in the interim.

Appointment and removal of Chairs: The accountable body confirmed that this rests with the awarding body in agreement with the MP, with MHCLG able to intervene if needed. remove: appoint and remove chairs from the bullet points

Scheme of Delegation: Members noted that MHCLG expects the Board make decisions together. The accountable body confirmed that Chairs have no separate spending authority, although they hold a deciding vote. All spend is authorised by the accountable body: up to £10,000 by the accountable body lead, and above that by the Director of Public Health. Subgroups can advise but the Board decides. Spend from the capacity funding (for example, engagement materials) has already been authorised for VAST. The accountable body has requested advice from the Monitoring Officer and Director of Legal on the funding-approval thresholds (sections 8 and 9).

Quarterly monitoring return: The return is due on 29 October and requires Board sign-off. The spreadsheet will be circulated so that sign-off can be given by email.

4. Small Grants Process Confirmation

The application form, criteria document, decision-making rubric and grant agreement have been circulated. The application form will be hosted on the website. The stakeholder launch is on 3 November, 10am–12pm, in the main hall of

the Neighbourhood Centre. Around 50 stakeholder organisations will be invited, and the launch will be open to interested residents. Follow-up support workshops will help groups develop applications. Members asked that invitations reach residents through social media and other channels, not just organisations.

Members discussed whether applications should be assessed on a rolling, first come, first served basis or in rounds. Concern was raised that a rolling approach could commit the £70,000 before stronger applications arrive. It was suggested that a proportion be held back for a second tranche to address gaps in the communities reached. It was also noted that bids tend to dry up after mid-December, and that groups, particularly small or non-constituted ones, need realistic time to deliver.

The emerging consensus was not to set a fixed annual end date but to run a continuous cycle of funding rounds. The first applications would close at the end of December, with the panel meeting in January and further rounds around every two months. Application support could be linked to engagement events. Applicants should be told when they will receive a decision; the current wording gives notification of the next panel date and a decision within about a working week of the panel. The Board asked for regular reports on amounts awarded, and projects will be monitored through regular catchups proportionate to project length.

On the panel, members felt eight was too many and suggested five or six at most, with an odd number for voting. One option is for all Board members to be eligible, with whoever is available forming a panel subject to a minimum quorum.

Board members are to send comments by next Thursday (22 October). The final version will then be circulated for sign-off ahead of the 3 November launch and publication on the website.

5. Engagement Sessions Update

Events from past 2 weeks

Several engagement events took place, including a well-attended community event, market sessions and door knocking by Board members. Residents attending the regular community walks said they value them because they are regular, get people out of the house and are at a set time and day.

Board engagement feedback

Residents asked for more activities for adults, with loneliness a recurring theme. They felt provision is mainly aimed at families and children. There was strong support for a full-time youth club offering a consistent, staffed, safe place for young people to go. Other ideas included craft activities and more activities at the library.

Members highlighted that many existing services, such as the low-cost food shop, are under-used because residents do not know they exist. A proposal was made for a regular printed community booklet delivered to every household (around 4,300 homes). Costings and professional marketing advice will be gathered and brought to the next meeting.

Board members are asked to email Waqas Butt notes of any engagement conversations they have, so that qualitative evidence can be compiled.

Event information moving forward

Weekly sessions continue Mondays and Tuesdays at the market and the Neighbourhood Centre, and Board members are welcome to join. Upcoming activity includes a Halloween event with a circus skills workshop alongside adult engagement, a foraging walk on Monday starting at Maple Court, school engagement at Eaton Park (date in November to be confirmed), the small grants launch on 3 November, the Winter Fayre on 28 November and a booking at the Neighbourhood Centre on 11 December. The Winter Fayre has high footfall and volunteers are welcome.

Ideas for Christmas and winter included community meals or a Christmas dinner for people on their own, a family-friendly quiz and bingo with consultation rounds, Christmas lights and a permanent Christmas tree for future years. A previous similar session run by the accountable body attracted 73 people across two sessions. Kitchen availability at the Neighbourhood Centre is to be checked. Members should send ideas and availability for events between now and the end of the year to Waqas Butt, and a plan will come to the next meeting.

Website update

The Our Bentilee Our Future website went live on 14 October. It includes information about Pride in Place, a Meet the Team page, a Have Your Say section and a link to the WhatsApp channel. Much of the content is currently placeholder. Board headshots and profiles are needed for all members. Members are asked to review and test the site and send feedback to Waqas Butt. Policies, the register of interests and Board notes will be added.

Youth Board update

Sha Owusu sent apologies. Engagement has taken place with nearly all schools, with one remaining session on Monday. Schools are forming their own groups, and the first Youth Board is planned for 11 December. A Board member with experience of home education offered to lead engagement with home-educated children and young people. Because of GDPR, initial contact will be made through the council, with a letter explaining that the Board member is contacting families in their Board capacity. Further information on the process is needed.

6. November Submission Priorities

Priorities Confirmation

Tracey Johnson presented a first draft, co-developed with the Co-Chairs and VAST, drawing on the MHCLG guidance, the terms of reference and all engagement to date. The submission has two parts: the vision (the place, resident evidence, intended change and how it will be delivered) and the investment plan. Government does not require every project to be fixed at this stage.

The target submission date is 30 November, with flexibility to 26 February if agreed with the MHCLG delivery manager. Submitting earlier brings forward approval and next year's funding. Evidence to date includes 1,849 pieces of evidence from 717 people recorded, including 428 surveys, with engagement in almost every school in the area. Overlaps between sources are still being checked.

The emerging priorities are children and young people, safety and security, environment and green space, and physical and mental health. Education and skills may run across the others. Resident quotes were presented under each priority, for example the lack of activities for young people, concerns about off-road motorbikes and anti-social behaviour, litter, fly-tipping and damaged play areas, and loneliness. Members agreed that no vote at this time was needed. The plan itself has to be agreed by the board before November Submission

Subgroup discussion

The planned group work, with each group exploring one priority (the change residents should experience, ideas to develop, quick wins, delivery partners, risks and how success would be measured), did not take place due to time. It will be done offline, with the slide deck shared with all members for comment and a further iteration brought to the next meeting.

Feedback to the board

Members supported the priorities as a starting point, but concerns were raised about whether the evidence demonstrates the deep and meaningful engagement that MHCLG requires, beyond surveys and conversations. The accountable body advised that the plan must show where and how engagement took place, or it may be referred back. Approaches such as participatory budgeting, creative engagement (for example, young people designing a play area) and local data such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation would strengthen it. A case study of earlier engagement is available and will be shared.

Members also discussed low awareness of Pride in Place among residents, limited social media reach, low trust (some residents assume it is a council initiative), and the need to show residents visible action and a "you said, we did" feedback loop. A letter drop that some members had not seen is to be followed up. Suggestions included suggestion boxes in schools listing the priorities, a simpler survey with fewer options, and communicating the priorities back to the community to test them. On off-road motorbikes, members favoured providing positive alternatives for young people over enforcement alone. Members agreed that engagement must continue alongside drafting, so that the submission can be judged on its merits before 30 November.

7. Process for Board Appointment

Carried to next Board Meeting

8. AOB

Carried to next board meeting

Meeting Date	Action	Owner	Progress
15/10/26	Make the agreed policy amendments (safeguarding out-of-hours contacts, complaints escalation, register of interests, removal of the live/work requirement, Chair appointment wording) and publish the policies on the website.	**Andy Meakin / VAST**	**Before next Board meeting**
15/10/26	Obtain legal advice on the Scheme of Delegation and funding-approval thresholds; revise wording.	**Vicki Gwynne / Andy Meakin**	**Before 3 Nov**

15/10/26	Circulate the quarterly monitoring return to the Board for email sign-off.	**Cassie Weaver / Vicki Gwynne**	**Before 29 October**
15/10/26	Send comments on the small-grants application form, criteria, rubric and grant agreement.	**All Board members**	**By 22 October**
15/10/26	Circulate the final small-grants documents for sign-off; confirm the funding-round timetable, panel size and quorum.	**Cassie Weaver / Co-Chairs**	**Before 3 November launch**
15/10/26	Send invitations for the 3 November small grants launch to stakeholders and residents, including via social media.	**VAST**	**ASAP**
15/10/26	Email notes of engagement conversations to Waqas Butt	**All Board members**	**Ongoing**
15/10/26	Cost options for a printed community newsletter and seek marketing advice on format and distribution.	**VAST**	**Next meeting**
15/10/26	Send ideas and availability for events up to the end of the year (Winter Fayre, Christmas activity); check Neighbourhood Centre kitchen availability.	**All Board members / Waqas Butt**	**Plan to next meeting**
15/10/26	Review and test the website, send feedback and provide headshots and profiles.	**All Board members / VAST / Sven**	**In progress**
15/10/26	Progress engagement with home-educated children and families through the council.	**Cllr Colclough / Waqas Butt**	**In progress**
15/10/26	Share the November submission slide deck; members to feed back on the draft priorities.	**Waqas Butt / Board**	**As soon as possible**
15/10/26	Compile a summary of all engagement activity to date (including the earlier case study and social media reach) and identify gaps in reach.	**Cassie Weaver / Waqas Butt**	**Next meeting**

15/10/26	Follow up the letter drop not received by some members; explore suggestion boxes in schools and communicating the priorities back to residents.	**VAST**	**Next meeting**
15/10/26	Bring the Board appointment process to the next meeting.	**Co-Chairs / Secretariat**	**Next meeting**

Date of Next Meeting

Date: November 5th

Venue: The Discovery Academy 4pm-6pm